

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 06030 241413Z

51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 OMB-01 AID-20 L-03 NIC-01 IO-14

CU-05 SS-20 NSC-07 DRC-01 /113 W

----- 104034

R 241325Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1127

INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS LIMA 6030

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PE

SUBJ: PRESS FREEDOM

1. A RUNNING DEBATE ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, AS SEEN BY THE INDEPENDENT PRESS AND THE PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILIES, CONTINUED IN LIMA JULY 23 WITH FAMILY OWNED EL COMERCIO AND CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA HEATING UP THEIR EDITORIAL OPPOSITION TO MEDIA STRUCTURAL CHANGES WHILE GOVERNMENT-OWNED LA NUEVA CRONICA AND PRO-GOVERNMENT, COOPERATIVELY-OWNED EXPRESO ASSAILED INDEPENDENT DAILIES AS VESTIGES OF THE OLIGARCHY AND CALLED FOR "COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA OF THE PEOPLE."

2. EL COMERCIO RAN A FRONT PAGE LISTING OF MONTHLY REPORTS PREVIOUSLY CARRIED IN ITS PAGES. EL COMERCIO CALLED THE LISTING A PROOF OF ITS SUPPORT FOR "CAMPAIGNS OF NATIONALISTIC CHARACTER" AND EMPHASIZED "EL COMERCIO DOESN'T CHANGE NOR HAS IT CHANGED ITS ATTITUDE THROUGH THE YEARS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT." IN EDITORIAL TITLED "HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY" IT WARNED THAT "THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY WILL DEPEND ON MEASURES ADOPTED TODAY IN THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA." IT CHARGES THAT ANY "STATUS ALTERATION" OF THE INDEPENDENT PRESS ORGANS WOULD BE "NOT ONLY AN UNJUST MOVE, BUT . . . WOULD BE AN ATTEMPT AGAINST PRESENT LAWS THAT GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION; WOULD PREJUDICE PERUVIAN PRESTIGE ABROAD AND WOULD MEAN A GRAVE HISTORIC

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES."

3. GOVERNMENT-OWNED LA NUEVA CRONICA BLASTED EL COMERCIO SPECIFICALLY IN 72-POINT BOLD-FACE PAGE ONE BANNER SAYING "EL COMERCIO AGAINST PERU FOR INTERESTS OF ONE FAMILY." SUB-HEADS SAY: "DOESN'T HAVE MORAL AUTHORITY TO SPEAK IN NAME OF PUBLIC OPINION" AND "ATTACKS GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT AFFECTS INTERESTS OF EXPLOITING OLIGARCHY." INSIDE PAGES HAVE THREE ARTICLES AND ONE DAILY COLUMN ATTACKING EL COMERCIO'S POSITION. ONE ARTICLE LISTS EL COMERCIO STOCKHOLDERS AND SHOWS MIRO QUESADA FAMILY AS MAJOR STOCK HOLDERS OF 47 MILLION SOLES STOCK. ANOTHER ARTICLE CRITICIZES EL COMERCIO'S PUBLICATION JULY 22 OF A LETTER PRESIDENT VELASCO WROTE IN 1969 TO CONGRATULATE EL COMERCIO ON ITS 130TH ANNIVERSARY AND TO LAUD ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY. THE CRITICISM POINTS OUT THAT VELASCO'S 1969 LETTER "WAS WRITTEN BEFORE CERTAIN EVENTS NOW WELL KNOWN TOOK PLACE" AND THAT IT DOES NOT PUT IN BALANCE PRESENT "DEEPLY NEGATIVE ASPECTS" OF THE NEWSPAPER. IT ADDS THAT LETTER WAS WRITTEN BEFORE EL COMERCIO BEGAN ATTACKING AGRARIAN REFORM LAW AND BEFORE LAW OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WENT INTO EFFECT. COLUMNIST ISMAEL FRIAS CHARGES EL COMERCIO DEFENDS FAMILY OWNERSHIP AND NOT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

4. CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA HAS EDITORIAL ENTITLED "REDS WANT SILENCE". IT SAYS MEDIA CHANGES ARE FAVORED BY COMMUNIST JOURNALISTS BECAUSE (1) COMMUNISM DISREGARDS PRIVATE PROPERTY AND (2) FREE PRESS HAS ALWAYS DENOUNCED FAILURES OF COMMUNISM. IT CONCLUDES: "THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES WILL KNOW, UNDOUBTEDLY, HOW TO EVALUATE THE SYSTEMATIC COMMUNIST AND PRO-COMMUNIST ATTACK AGAINST THE FREE PRESS."

5. EXPRESO WRITER CARLOS ORTEGA PUBLISHES THIRD IN SERIES OF ARTICLES DISCUSSING A "NATIONAL POLICY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION", WHICH HE SAYS IS BASED ON A SEMINAR ON SCIENCE OF COMMUNICATION HELD IN QUITO UNDER UNESCO SPONSORSHIP RECENTLY. HIS ARTICLE DEALS WITH MEDIA OWNERSHIP BY ECONOMIC SECTORS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, NATIONALIZATION, PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, NEWSPAPERS, INFORMATION CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LIMA06030
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740200-0716
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740722/aaaaasrz.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 OCT 2002 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <17 JAN 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS FREEDOM
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PE, EL COMMERIO, LA PRENSA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005